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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Fifteen Soldiers graduate Basic NCO Course

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. - Fifteen South Dakota National Guard Soldiers graduated Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course-Phase I on March 9 at the 196th Regional Training Institute in Sioux Falls, S.D.

The Basic NCO Course, or BNCOC, is an important step in the education process of developing NCO leadership. Its main focus is to target staff sergeants and promotable sergeants to plan, develop and execute the duties of the NCO. Most importantly, the course gives Soldiers the ability to lead battle-focused training and the confidence to execute that training on the battlefield.

The class curriculum consists of over 20 subjects packed into 12 “long and action filled” days and the training is consistently changing.

“Our enemies are constantly changing tactics; therefore we must adjust our training to keep current with today’s operations,” said Lt. Col. Tim Moran, 196th RTI General Studies Battalion commander.

The training is not only instrumental to individual Soldiers, but it is also a key to the success of their unit. With the current situations around the world and the amount of new Soldiers joining the Guard, developing its leaders is of high importance.

“We have many challenges as leaders. Challenges such as ensuring we train every one of our Soldiers to the standard and beyond. This is very crucial as we send our Soldiers to places like Iraq and Afghanistan,” said State Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bekaert.

The Soldiers in South Dakota have a slight advantage when it comes to attending certain courses such as BNCOC. With the 196th RTI headquarters in Sturgis and a satellite school in Sioux Falls, they don’t have to travel as far to receive training which means less time away from their families.

The South Dakota National Guard has a strong tradition of excellence in training and in mission success.

“People know that when they see our state patch that they will get great training,” said Moran. “They remember the patch from either a deployment or from training here in the past. It’s synonymous with excellence.”

Completion of BNCOC is a requirement to progress in rank in the South Dakota National Guard, and Bekaert recommends it for all enlisted Soldiers.

“With this type of training, you always walk away with beneficial training for the future of your career, both military and civilian, and the people you work around,” said Bekaert.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753,

NOTE: Since the Sept. 11 attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 730 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terrorism. More than 230 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas throughout Southwest Asia. More than 4,000 National Guardsmen are serving in a non-active duty status in South Dakota and continue to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.